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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000370

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ECUADOR'S NEW AMB-DESIGNATE TO U.S. CONFIRMED:
MAURICIO POZO

REF: QUITO 282

1. (C) Summary: Former Finance Minister Mauricio Pozo has been offered and has accepted the position of Ambassador to the United States, according to reliable sources. We expect to received a request for agrement for Pozo during the week of February 21. Pozo is well and favorably known to the Embassy. End Summary.

2. (C) Pozo confirmed to the DCM on February 11 that President Gutierrez had offered him the Washington post. He had deferred a response until the two could meet in person on February 14. Presidential Advisor Carlos Polit and Trade Minister Ivonne Baki both (separately) subsequently confirmed to the Ambassador that Pozo had accepted the post. Polit said we could expect a request for agrement early in the week of February 21.

3. (C) Pozo told the DCM that his tenure in Washington would be limited--Gutierrez had agreed to nominate Pozo for Executive President of the Andean Development Corporation. The current CAF president's term ends in December 2006. He also inquired about the state of bilateral relations on several issues outside his economic expertise. The DCM reiterated USG concern about respect for democratic institutions here, the urgency of GOE engagement on an Article 98 agreement, and the need for progress on TIP, money-laundering legislation, and labor reform.

4. (C) Comment: Pozo would be an excellent representative of Ecuador during the run-up to the signing of an FTA; we strongly recommend speedy approval of agrement. Economic issues are his strength; but his appointment offers great new opportunities on a range of pending bilateral issues. Once the agrement request is received, we will proceed to brief him in more depth on USG perspectives on these issues.
Kenney